AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of using a router to cache inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a network having a plurality of client~~ for caching information about devices on a network, the method comprising:

storing ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about a target device in a cache memory coupled to a router, wherein the router is communicatively coupled to the target device and wherein the router and the target device reside on the network;

receiving a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device;

reading the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device from the cache memory coupled to the router; and

providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device in response to the request.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising collecting the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device prior to storing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein collecting the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device comprises detecting the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device as the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device is transmitted from the target device to a requesting host device.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein collecting the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device comprises detecting a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device as the request is routed from a host to the target device and copying the ~~inquiry~~ static or

near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device which is returned by the target device in response to the request.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device in response to the request comprises determining whether the target device is busy, and providing the stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device if the target device is busy and providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device returned by the target device if the target device is not busy.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein if the target device is not busy, the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device that is returned by the target device in response to the request is stored in the cache memory in place of previously stored ~~inquiry~~ data about the target device.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device from the cache memory is provided to the target device in response to the request regardless of whether or not the target device is busy.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about each of a plurality of target devices, receiving requests for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about one or more of the plurality of target devices, determining whether the ~~corresponding~~ one or more of the plurality of target devices are busy and, for each of the one or more of the plurality of target devices that is busy, returning the corresponding stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the corresponding target device, and, for each of the one or more of the plurality of target devices that is not busy, returning the corresponding ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the corresponding target device returned by the corresponding target device.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: upon receiving a first request for ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about a first target device, forwarding the first request to the first target device regardless of whether or not the first target device is busy, storing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request, forwarding the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request to a requesting device coupled to the router and, in response to subsequent requests for the static or near-static data about the first target device, reading the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request from the cache memory coupled to the router and providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request in response to the subsequent requests.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining whether a received command comprises a request for ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about a first target device on the network and: if the received command comprises a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device, reading the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device from the cache memory coupled to the router and providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the first target device in response to the request; and if the received command does not comprise a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device, forwarding the command to the first target device for execution of the command.

11. (Currently Amended) A device comprising:

a router configured to route data between one or more hosts and one or more target devices; and

a cache memory coupled to the router;

wherein the router is configured to store ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about each of the one or more target devices received from the one or more target devices

and, where a target device is busy, to provide at least a portion of the stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device in response to a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to one of~~ about the target ~~devices that is busy~~ device.

12. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to detect the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device as the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device is transmitted from the target device to a requesting host device.

13. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to detect a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device as the request is routed from a host to the target device and copying the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device which is returned by the target device in response to the request.

14. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to determining whether the target device is busy, and provide the stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device if the target device is busy and providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device returned by the target device if the target device is not busy.

15. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 14, wherein, if the target device is not busy, the router is configured to store the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device returned by the target device in response to the request in the cache memory in place of previously stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device.

16. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to provide the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device from the cache

memory to the target device in response to the request regardless of whether or not the target device is busy.

17. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to store ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about each of a plurality of target devices, to receive requests for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about one or more of the plurality of target devices, to determine whether one or more of the ~~corresponding~~ plurality of target devices are busy and to return the corresponding stored ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the corresponding target device for each of the one or more of the plurality of target devices that is busy, and returning the corresponding ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the corresponding target device returned by the corresponding target device for each of the one or more of the plurality of target devices that is not busy.

18. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein if the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about a first target device is not stored in the cache memory coupled to the router, the router is configured to: upon receiving a first request for ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the firs target device, forward the first request to the first target device regardless of whether or not the first target device is busy; store ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request; forward the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request to a requesting device; and, in response to subsequent requests, reading the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request from the cache memory coupled to the router and providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device returned by the first target device in response to the first request in response to the subsequent requests.

19. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to determine whether a received command comprises a request for ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about a first target device on the network and wherein the router is

configured to: if the received command comprises a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device, read the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device from the cache memory coupled to the router and provide the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the first target device in response to the request; and if the received command does not comprise a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the first target device, forward the command to the first target device for execution of the command.

20. (Cancelled).

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium, wherein the computer readable medium contains one or more instructions which are ~~configured~~ executable by a processor to cause a computer to perform the method of ~~using a router to cache inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a network having a plurality of client~~ caching information about devices on a network, the method comprising:

storing ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about a target device in a cache memory coupled to a router, wherein the router is communicatively coupled to the target device and wherein the router and the target device reside on the network;

receiving a request for the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device;

reading the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data about the target device from the cache memory coupled to the router; and

providing the ~~inquiry~~ static or near-static data ~~corresponding to~~ about the target device in response to the request.

23. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the static or near-static data include identification information specific to the target device.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the identification information specific to the target device includes a serial number of the target device.

25. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the identification information specific to the target device includes configuration of the target device.

26. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the static or near-static data includes an indicator indicating that the target device is unable to respond.

27. (New) The device of claim 11, wherein the static or near-static data include identification information specific to the target device.

28. (New) The device of claim 27, wherein the identification information specific to the target device includes a serial number of the target device.

29. (New) The device of claim 27, wherein the identification information specific to the target device includes configuration of the target device.

30. (New) The device of claim 11, wherein the static or near-static data includes an indicator indicating that the target device is unable to respond.